

Protestors clash with Odisha Police near proposed JSW plant site; many injured

PARADIP(KCN): The proposed plant site of JSW Steel in Odisha's Jagatsinghpur district on Friday turned into a battlefield as villagers



clashed with the police over demolition of betel vines. Villagers claimed at least 40 protestors, including children and elderly people, were injured as the police baton-charged

them, while an official said the personnel of the force were also attacked leading to injury to five of them. The incident oc-

curred near Dhinkia village, the epicentre of a movement against setting up of a factory by South Korean steel major Posco a decade ago. The government has planned to allot land

to JSW for its Rs 55,000 crore project from various villages, barring Dhinkia. Residents of Dhinkia alleged that they were stopped by the police

at Mahala when they were on their way to nearby Patana village to oversee the condition of their betel vines, which they claimed to have been demolished by the authorities.

The administration has created Mahala village after carving out some portion of Dhinkia recently.

A section of villagers had clashed with the police at least twice last month on this issue also.

"We were prevented from going to our betel vines by the police. When the villagers said that they must go to the betel vines, the police resorted to lathi charge without any provocation," Debendra Swain, a former Panchayat Samiti member, said before being taken to police custody.

He claimed that 40 people were injured in police action. Eight of them were

Rourkela Steel Plant to check pollution in Brahmani river

ROURKELA(KCN): With the existing treatment facilities and quality of treated wastewater discharged to river Brahmani losing ef-



ficacy, the Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) of SAIL has finally decided to tackle the issue through various projects and complete the work by the end of 2022. The existing multi-stage treatment strategy involves the processing of wastewater at the Waste Water Treatment

COVID-19 cases rising fast in Delhi but hospitalisations, deaths low: Kejriwal

NEW DELHI(KCN): COVID-19 cases are rising fast in the national capital but there is no reason to worry, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Friday, emphasising that



hospitalisation and death rates are quite low. He asked people to be responsible and assured them that the government has made all preparations and enough hospital beds are available. He also said that the restrictions imposed in view of the surge in coronavirus cases will only be tightened if necessary, "but if corona cases begin to decline, we will relax the restrictions." "Cases are rapidly increasing and there are no two ways about it. We all know that the Omicron variant is quite transmissible and infectious," Kejriwal told reporters on the sidelines of an event. He was at Rajghat to flag off 100 low-floor AC

Plants (WWTPs) of respective departments. This will be done before discharging the treated effluent to the Guradhi nullah through nine outfalls to a lagoon which acts as an oxidation pond for secondary treatment. The lagoon, spread over 52 hectare, is designed to retain and naturally treat the wastewater for several days with RSP claiming that the quality of the treated wastewater to the river is always within the statutory norms.

Sources said, work is in full swing to de-silt the lagoon with the evacuation of three lakh cubic metres of silt using dredging/mechanical excavation. The project worth Rs 23 crore envisages creating a

CNG buses that will run from the Ghumanhera depot in outer Delhi and will cater to rural areas. The chief minister said that despite the rise in cases and the increase in positivity rate, which has crossed 29 per cent, the hospitalisation rate and the number of deaths are quite low. "As a result, there is no need for people to be concerned or to panic. From the perspective of the Delhi government, everything is in order. There is no shortage of hospital beds. There are also plenty of ICU beds available. We do

not need to panic, but we must act responsibly. We are keeping an eye on the coronavirus situation," he said. Health Minister Satyendar Jain has been saying that the hospitalisation rate in Delhi has stagnated, which is an indication that the current wave of the pandemic has plateaued. According to him, 75 per cent of the people who died due to coronavirus were unvaccinated and 90 per cent of them had comorbidities. Delhi on Thursday reported 28,867 COVID-19 cases, the sharpest single-day spike since the beginning of the pandemic, and 31 deaths, while the positivity rate went up to 29.21 per cent, according to official data.

World Odisha Society Observes First Foundation Day

Los Angeles/London/Singapore/Dubai/Moscow/Canberra/Puri/NewDelhi/ Bhubaneswar,



(KCN): World Odisha Society (WOS) is the highest and apex Organisation of the Odia diaspora World Wide. The Society consists of the representatives of the Odia Samaj of different Countries, prominent Non – Resident Odias, Odisha Lovers and eminent community leaders representing Odia Socio – Cultural institutions. Apart from ensuring the safety, Security, Solidarity and well being of Odias all over the World, the forum has been engaged in Projecting, promoting and Propagating the art, Architecture, Culture, Crafts, carvings, Tradition, Tourism, History, Ethos, Language, Literature, attire and Cuisine of Odisha in international arena.

WOS was formed on the Auspicious Day of Makar Sankranti on 14th January 2021. When the entire World was devastated due to covid Pandemic, WOS took birth as a bright ray of hope and much sought after solace to Odia communities across the Globe. The Society has Non Resident Odia representatives of around Fifty

Six Countries of the World Now.

Senior Journalist Kishore Dwivedi Is the First Chairman of WOS. Around Eighty Members of Executive Body has been in charge of the different Departments of WOS . The Speaker of the Odisha Legislative Assembly Dr Surjya Narayan Patro is the Chief Patron, Odia Member of Parliament in Kenya Dr Swarup Mishra is the Chief Adviser and Director of Sovaniya



Andolan Dr Arundhati Debi is the Founder of WOS.

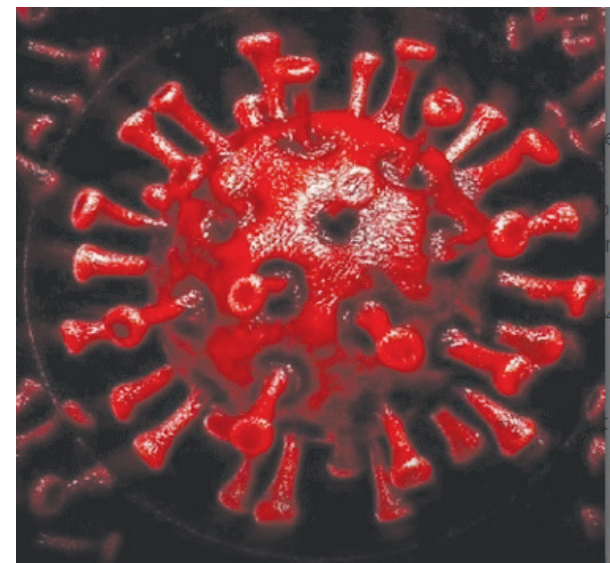
The First Foundation Day Of World Odisha Society has been Observed on Friday 14th January 2022. Due To World Wide Resurgence Of COVID Pandemic, the Anniversary Event has been kept as a simple and solemn affair without any Celebration.

Society's Senior Member Badri Nath Mishra , Joint General Secretary Eco Madhu Sudan Mishra, Noted Sand Artiste Manas Sahoo and Other Wellwishers have Offered Akhanda Deepa at The Lion's Gate in front Of Shree Jagannath Temple at Puri as a mark of WOS's Foundation Day and Prayed Lord Of The Universe to Save Mankind from Corona Menace and Bless WOS.

WOS's Auditor CONTINUED ON: P-8

Covid continues cross 10K mark

Bhubaneswar(KCN): For the second consecutive day, the State witnessed over 10,000 Covid cases. On Friday, the State recorded 10,273 Covid-19 cases taking the active caseload to 53,171. Information and Public Relation department says, out of the 10,273 fresh cases, 1,065 cases from 0 to 18 years age group. The State had yesterday recorded 10,059 cases. Similarly, 5,962 were



detected in quarantine while 4,311 are local contact cases, said the department.

Highest 3,496 cases reported from Khordha district followed by Sundergarh

(1049), Cuttack (844) and Sambalpur (529). Similarly, Balasore recorded 457 Covid cases today while Mayurbhanj recorded 340 cases, followed by Puri (269), Kalahandi (203), Jharsuguda (202), Bolangir (191), Koraput (186), Rayagada (183), Jajpur (143), Jagatsinghpur (132), Sonapur (132), Gajapati (126), Nabarangpur (125), Nayagarh (121),

CONTINUED ON: P-7

Imran, Pakistan Defence Minister exchange heated words over neglect of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province

ISLAMABAD(KCN): Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan and Defence Minister Pervez Khattak had a heated exchange of words when the latter said he would not vote for him and complained about the neglect of the north



western Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province by the government, according to a media report on Friday. The incident occurred on Thursday during a meeting of the parliamentary party of the ruling alliance, presided over by Prime Minister Khan, at the Parliament House, the Dawn newspaper reported.

The defence minister, while attending the meeting to clear a controversial Supplementary Finance Bill-2022, commonly called mini-budget, reportedly said that he would not vote for the prime minister Khan if new gas connections were not given to the people of the less developed province.

Khattak is elected to the National Assembly from Nowshera-I of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province.

The sources said that on Khattak's complaints, the prime minister became angry and asked him to stop "blackmailing" him.

On this, the defence minister left the meeting hall but was later called back by the prime minister, the report said.

After the meeting, the prime minister sat in his chamber for almost CONTINUED ON: P-7

Bhojpuri should get constitutional status- Nitesh Kumar

Rourkela (KCN): Bhojpuri is a priceless treasure of cultural heritage, full of sweetness. 'Bhojpuri should get constitutional status'. 'It should be included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.' Social Activist and President of Super 20

addressing gatherings using Bhojpuri. Bhojpuri is spoken prominently in Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and other states in the country. Bhojpuri speakers are found in almost all parts of the country. It also holds

to include Bhojpuri in the 8th Schedule if the BJP came to power at the Centre. Then Law Minister Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad went to the extent of saying "even my native language is Bhojpuri and I, along with other party leaders, would

Schedule of the Constitution. Speaking in Parliament, Yogi Adityanath said Bhojpuri is the world's largest dialect which is spoken by 16 crore people in not only Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand but also in



Social Organisation Nitesh Kumar wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for Bhojpuri on Thursday. Nitesh Kumar said that he is deeply sorry to say that other countries have recognized Bhojpuri but it is neglected in its own country till now. People do appreciate when you announce any sentences while

the status of a recognised national language in Nepal. Inclusion of the Bhojpuri language in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution of India has been one of the oldest demands of the people who speak this language. In 2013, Former Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar Sushil Kumar Modi had promised

work hard to get this beloved language of ours its due place in the Constitution." On April 28, 2016, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister and BJP Lok Sabha MP from Gorakhpur Yogi Adityanath made a strong case to the BJP-led ruling NDA government for the inclusion of Bhojpuri language in the 8th

27 other countries across the world. Nitesh Kumar has pleaded for considering the matter with priority for the right of Bhojpuri to get constitutional status. He assures him that people in crores worldwide will appreciate. He sent it's copy to Chief Minister of Bihar Nitish Kumar on Thursday.

DBT-BIRAC supported start-ups InnAccel and NIRAMAI have received World Bank Group and the Consumer Technology Association's Global Women's HealthTech Awards

Kolkata (KCN): NIRAMAI Health Analytix Pvt. Ltd. and InnAccel Technologies Pvt. Ltd., two start-ups supported by DBT-BIRAC, have received the World Bank Group and the Consumer Technology Association's Global Women's Health Tech Awards, which recognises innovative startups that leverage tech to improve women's health and safety in emerging markets. NIRAMAI Health Analytix Pvt. Ltd, a recipient of BIRAC's Women in Entrepreneurial Research Award 2019, was selected for its novel software-based medical device that detects early-stage breast cancer in a simple and private way on women of all age groups and breast densities, addressing a critical unmet need in cancer screening. The solution developed is a low cost, accurate, automated, portable, contactless, radiation-free, and painless cancer screening tool with no known side effects. The core innovation is a machine learning and AI-based Computer Diagnostic Engine called Thermalytix that uses artificial intelligence algorithms to interpret thermal images and generates a quantitative report for breast health and likely abnormalities. So far, over 45,000 women have been screened through the startup's tie-ups with over 30 hospitals and diagnostic centres across India. The product can help 2 Billion women in the world to regularly screen for cancer and can potentially save 90,000 lives every year in India alone.

InnAccel Technologies Pvt Ltd., a recipient of DBT and BMGF's Grand Challenges Exploration-India 2019, was adjudged a winner of the Global Women's Health Tech Awards for Fetal Lite, a next-generation, AI-powered fetal heart rate (FHR) monitor based on fetal ECG signal extraction technology for mothers in labour or post 37 weeks of gestation. Fetal Lite has next-gen ECG signal processing and is more accurate, reliable, and easier to use than the conventional Doppler-based devices while being comfortable for the mother. Fetal Lite is European CE Certified and has completed 2 clinical trials of 60+ patients with excellent results and completed the demo in 30+ Hospitals. The device can be used for both active and remote monitoring in the in-hospital and in-home settings. So far, the device has helped doctors to monitor 5000 cases, including in tribal areas, and has the potential to save 1.2 million lives per year across the world.

"We are pleased to receive this recognition from World Bank. It's a validation of the applicability of our Indian innovation to the world," said Geeta Manjunath, Founder, NIRAMAI. "The support from BIRAC has been crucial for our journey of idea to benefitting the patients with European regulatory approval. It is not just funding but mentoring and handholding that has helped us mitigate risks," said Nitesh Jangir, Co-founder, InnAccel.

"I am delighted to hear about this global recognition to two of the startups supported by the Department. As a funding agency, these success stories are a validation about the impact we have created by nurturing a vibrant startup ecosystem for solving the pressing challenges being faced by humanity," said Dr Rajesh Gokhale, Secretary, DBT

As per a statement by the World Bank, this year, the Awards attracted over 70 companies from 35 countries, which submitted their innovative products and services under three categories: reproductive health and pregnancy, general women's and adolescent health, and women safety and security.

About Department of Biotechnology: The Department of Biotechnology (DBT), established in 1986, is an Indian Government department under the Ministry of Science and Technology. DBT is responsible for administering development and commercialisation in modern biology and biotechnology in India. The Department has made significant achievements in the growth and application of biotechnology in the broad areas of agriculture, health care, animal sciences, environment, and industry. The proven technologies at the laboratory level have been scaled up and demonstrated in the field. For more information, visit, <http://dbtindia.gov.in/> About BIRAC: Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) is a not-for-profit Section 8, Schedule B, Public Sector Enterprise, set up by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India as an Interface Agency to strengthen and empower the emerging Biotech enterprise to undertake strategic research and innovation, addressing nationally relevant product development needs. For more information, visit, <https://birac.nic.in/> Twitter - @DBTIndia; @BIRAC_2012, Facebook - Department of Biotechnology, India

ILPF opens SATHI Odisha Center

Bhubaneswar(KCN): ILPF plans to provide subsidized medicine of reputed brand, affordable investigation in additional free yoga, physiotherapy as well as dietary consultation to bring the health at an affordable price yet with quality. This is not only medicine but complete basket of holistic health at door step. Accordingly, Umakanta Pani, Trustee of ILPF and Project In-Charge for SATHI organized a ceremony in the premise of ILPF. This was done with full Covid protocol as per the Norms. All the members of ILPF - a health based charitable organization have appreciated the innovative idea of Dr. Ashok Choudhury and Prasanna Kumar Hota, Former Union Secretary Health & Family Welfare for providing medicines and other healthcare at an affordable price.

The members appealed to serve the society to save everyone from the third wave of COVID 19. Many eminent doctors, social workers, yoga professionals attended the spiritual celebration. Prasad was arranged for the members as well as the guests. Soon the services will be launched at Bhubaneswar with facility of online booking by iSATHI app or visiting website www.ilpfsathi.in. Any queries related can be obtained from Project Officer in phone number -9078700111. The project Sathi was supported by the technology tycoon, philanthropist, Dan Mishra who is residing in Canada and volunteered to the cause of Odisha and Mankind. This innovative affordable and comprehensive health services will be first of kind in the state, said K N Biswal, Member of ILPF.

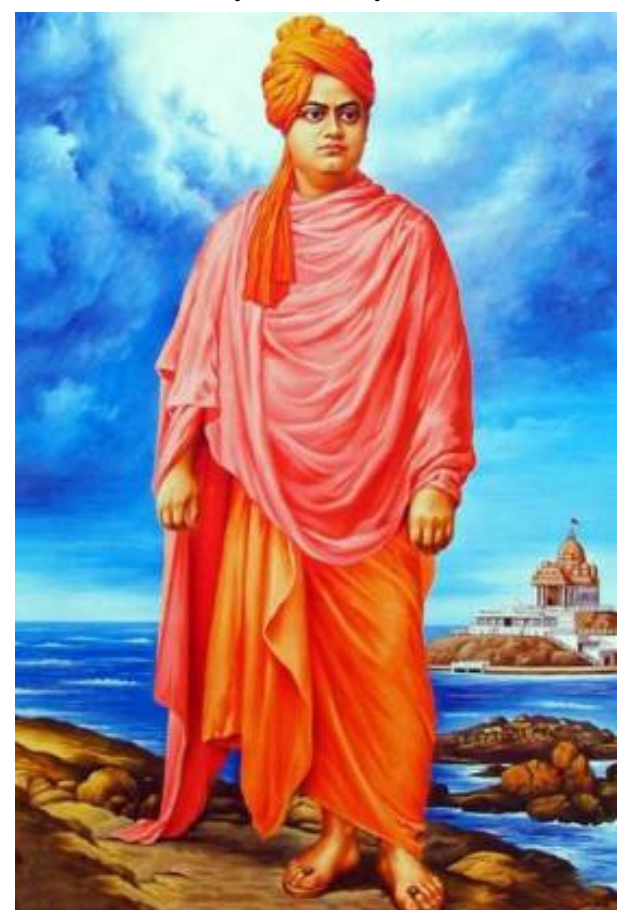
159th Vivekananda Jayanti is Celebrated by the Vivekananda Kendra Kanyakumari and Vivekananda Rock Memorial

Kolkata(KCN): The Vivekananda Kendra commenced with the teachings of Swami Mangalacharan patha Vivekananda. He mantra of Swami Vivekananda .He



Kanyakumari and Vivekananda Rock Memorial, Dakshina Kolkata Netaji Nagar has celebrated 159th birth day of by Ms.Ayyotre Saha and master Tithiswar Saha. An opening song was presented by Susri Subarna Roy.

also emphasized on ideologies of Swami Vivekananda how it is implemented at .Programme come to an end with the Shanti Path and Prathana presented by Sushri Narayani



Swami Vivekananda, which is popularly known as National Youth Day. This online virtual platform programme was conducted by the karyakartas of Dakshina Kolkata Netaji Nagar karyasthan and the Bangla Prakshana Bighag of Paschima Banga Pranta. The Programme was

Kendra. A renowned Yoga and Wellness trainer Shri Sanatan Mahakud spoke on the four streams of Yoga i.e Raja Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga and Karma Yoga and how all these are utilized at Pancha Kosa Level. A senior Karya Karta from Kamarpukur Karyasthan Shri Nema Chanda Guin has delivered a speech on Swadesh Bharati. Total programme was digitally managed by Dr. Manjari Das and participated by Radharani Mondal, Ardhandu Sekhar Das, Swati Chatterjee, Asha Basak, Anuradha Das, Helen Sinha, Sampa Das, Madhumita Bhattacharjee, Balam Kundu and some other senior members of the organization.

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Appealing to fans' inner writers, Anupam Kher offers autographed book

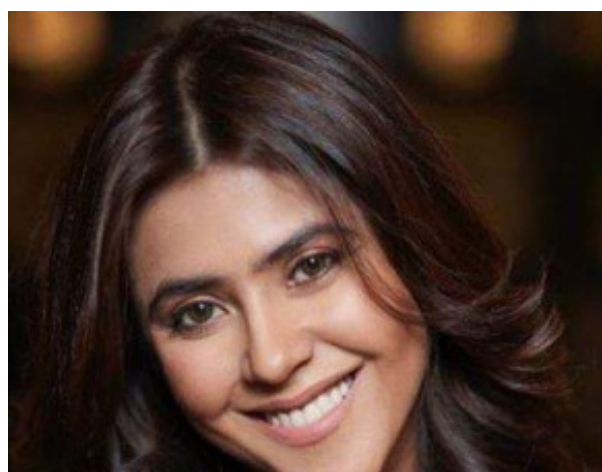


NEW DELHI: Asking his fans to rejuvenate their inner writers, veteran actor Anupam Kher, offered them to send his autographed book 'Your Best Day is Today' on Tuesday. Kher hopped on to Twitter and shared a candid picture of him. Calling on his fans to give a suitable caption for the picture, he wrote "Mujhe meri ye tasveer pasand hai. (I like this picture of mine) I will send an autographed copy of my latest book #YourBestDayIsToday to the person whose caption for this pic I like the most!" Adding to the cation, he noted "Hindi or English - apka caption kisi bhi bhasha me chalega! Chaliye! Apne andar ke lekhak ko jagaiye!! (your caption will go in any language! Let's go! Wake up your inner writer,) with Hibiscus smiling face and heart-shaped smile emoticon. Within a few hours of being posted, fans of the former Chairman of Film and Television Institute of India started coming up with innovative captions and showcased their creative skills. A day ago, the 65-year-old star shared a clip of his mother lauding PM Modi and scientist's efforts for the new COVID-19 vaccines.

SC grants Ekta Kapoor interim protection from arrest in FIR over web series

NEW DELHI(K-CN): The Supreme

leged objectionable content in her web



Court on Thursday granted interim protection from arrest to TV producer Ekta Kapoor in an FIR against her for al-

series "XXX season 2". A bench headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde granted interim protection to

Phenomenal experience: Riteish Deshmukh praises Anil Kapoor, Anurag Kashyap's 'AK vs AK'

NEW DELHI(K-CN): Actor Riteish Deshmukh lauded Vikramaditya Motwane's 'AK vs AK' and termed the

blown!!! #AKvsAK is a phenomenal experience - @VikramMotwane take a bow my friend," tweeted

only you could do this, you are pure gold in this film but @HarshKapoor_has outdone your entire performance in one

movie star and a film director who get into a public spat, following which the director retaliates by kidnapping the actor's



Netflix based film "a phenomenal experience". Deshmukh took to Twitter to share a poster of the movie, which features Anurag Kashyap and Anil Kapoor in lead roles. "Mind has been

Deshmukh. He then went on to heap praise on Kashyap, Kapoor, and his actor son Harshvardhan Kapoor who has a cameo in the film. "@anuragkashyap72 how good are you, @AnilKapoor Sir,

scene," the 'Housefull' actor's tweet further read. While Kapoor essays the role of a yesterday actor, Kashyap plays the role of a disgraced film director in the film. 'AK vs AK,' revolves around the story of a

daughter and films the search for her in real-time. The Netflix India Original film was released on the platform on December 24, which also happens to be Anil Kapoor's birthday.

Aakanksha Singh joins team Mayday

Ajay Devgn's Mayday has been creating a massive buzz because of its interest-

the icing on the cake is that Ajay Sir is directing the film. It's actually happening!



ing star cast, which includes Amitabh Bachchan, Ajay Devgn, Rakul Preet Singh and Angira Dhar. Talented actress, Aakanksha Singh has now joined the team. Aakanksha will essaying the role of Ajay Devgn's wife in the film. She joined the shoot yesterday. Aakanksha says, "It's like a dream come true to be a part of such a big and much-awaited film. I am so excited to share the screen with Ajay Sir and Amitabh Sir; and

It's an important role and I am lucky that the first muhurat shot of the film had me in it." Ajay Devgn took to social media to announce that the shoot had begun yesterday. "Happy to officially begin Mayday in a start-to-finish shooting schedule. Seek blessings from the Almighty and my parents. Nothing is complete without the support of all my fans, family and well-wishers. Releases on 29th April 2022 (sic)" he posted.

'Wanted to make a film on Indian Army with Shah Rukh Khan', says Director Kabir Khan

MUMBAI(KCN): Filmmaker Kabir Khan, who is gearing up for the release of his web series "The Forgotten Army: Azaadi Ke Liye", based on Indian National Army (INA), says he wanted to make a film on the subject starring Shah Rukh Khan. He added that Shah Rukh didn't charge a fee for the voiceover he gave for the series. "Shah Rukh has very graciously given the voiceover. The series is based on a true story, so there is an introduction of a few minutes before every episode along with real footage, where he has lent his voice. I talked about it with Shah Rukh earlier as well, when this was a film script. Back then, I wanted Shah Rukh to do the film. We even had a few meetings but we couldn't take it forward," said Kabir while promoting the series along with its lead actors Sunny Kaushal and Sharvari Wagh. Kabir added that Shah Rukh didn't charge a single

paisa for his voiceover assignment. "When I was making this series, I thought I should ask Shah Rukh (to be the narrator) because Shah Rukh's father had involvement with this army. His father knew General Shahnawaz Khan, who was an important part of INA. So, I knew he (Shah Rukh Khan) has sympathy and attachment with Azad Hind Fauj and I called him up. It's not an easy task to ask a superstar for a voiceover but Shah Rukh instantly agreed to do it. Usually, when you discuss a film with Shah Rukh, it's a long process, but in this case Shah Rukh literally did the voiceover for us on the second day. I don't know whether he would like me to reveal this, but he didn't take a fee from us. I think the kind of attachment he has with Azad Hind Fauj reflects in his act." Incidentally, Shah Rukh did a cameo in Kabir Khan's 2017 release "Tubelight", starring Salman Khan.

How challenging will the elections be in the Covid-19 era?

The first elections post-onset of the Covid-19 pandemic were held for the Bihar Legislative Assembly in the months of November and December 2020. The Election Commission had patted its back and congratulated itself on the successful completion of those elections. Following that, the country bore witness to the election fiasco in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly which was carried out in 8 phases from March to April 2021.

Then began the country's challenging battle against the second wave of Covid-19. Recently, the Election Commission also announced the schedule for the Legislative Assembly elections of five states, namely Goa, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Manipur, and Uttarakhand. As a result of these elections, the country will receive around 690 new MLAs and about 20 new Rajya Sabha members. This entire process of these assembly elections will unfold steadily over two months.

During this period, around 18 and a half crore voters will exercise their franchise to vote. Overall, this assembly election will be held on a massive scale. Although there was an apprehension that the election process might be postponed due to the third wave of the ongoing and seemingly never-ending pandemic, after taking a thorough review of the situation, the Election Commission has concluded that the elections will be conducted discreetly. Anyway, postponing elections is not that easy either. As soon as the code of conduct came into force, the administration in various districts intensified the work of removing posters and hoardings up to the assembly constituency level. Now, it will be a challenge for political parties to reach out to every voter amid the Covid-19 transition.

In the Panchayat, the Municipal Corporation, and the Vidhan Sabha elections, the candidates have been going door-to-door.

Now, it would not be right to expect the same in these elections. As the global pandemic doesn't seem to be drawing to an end, the approach and procedure of the elections are subject to change. The elections will have to be conducted in such a manner that the outcome of the pandemic on the public is negligible. However, the



responsibility to ensure that the elections are conducted safely does not solely lie on the Election Commission. For this, the leaders of political parties, the volunteers, and all the workers will also have to remain vigilant. Voters will also have to make sacrifices to vote for the consummation of the festival of democracy. It is common knowledge that subsequent to the announcement of the election schedule, the model code of conduct has also come into force. In the midst of peaking fear and terror of the third wave of the pandemic, relief can be drawn from two facts. First, in the states where elections are going to be held, the majority of voters have at least one dose of the Covid-19 vaccine, although the pace of vaccination has been slow in Punjab. That was not the case when elections were held in Bihar or West Bengal. Everyone knows that the only way to avoid being infected by the virus is to get vaccinated on time. That, along with wearing a mask and following the norms of social distancing can help keep the virus at bay. The second thing is, in these elections, all the political parties will have to reach out to their voters through the virtual approach. They will lay more emphasis on virtual rallies only. In this manner, all unnecessary gatherings can be avoided.

The Bharatiya Janata Party is powerful and

R.K. Sinha

active on various social media platforms. They have scores of followers on Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram, with their numbers only hinting at an upward trend. It also has a wide network of WhatsApp groups. In such a situation, it can efficiently organize meetings in virtual mode as per its needs. Other parties also understand

the importance of social media. A budget of Rs.40 lakhs has been capped for contesting the elections. In such a situation, the candidates of different parties will have to work very carefully. Because in this age of technology, it is not a difficult task for the Election Commission to keep track of every penny spent.

Although all political parties are deliberating about keeping distance from tainted leaders, every party requires a candidate. The Bharatiya Janata Party is undertaking all possible efforts to conquer all the four other states, including Uttar Pradesh. It is also working hard for the accomplishment of its goal. Currently, it is soaring ahead in the race against all other parties. The BJP has snatched almost all the significant points from the hands of the opposition. Apart from the election announcements of various parties, in totality, the BJP is making strides in almost all the spheres affecting life. Whether it be solving regional problems, turning different castes or classes in their favor, or capitalizing on religious sentiments. All prominent leaders of the party are currently working in the field.

The influence of the Samajwadi Party is limited only to Uttar Pradesh. Congress is fighting to hold onto the rank of the number four party in Uttar Pradesh. There is no

respectable place left for it in such a unique state of the nation. However, the Gandhi family claims to be from Uttar Pradesh. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) visible in Punjab and Uttarakhand is nowhere to be found in Uttar Pradesh. So, it is pretty evident that India's largest party, BJP, will try to form its government in all five states.

However, various parties will pose obstacles and challenge it, especially the Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh and Congress and AAP in Uttarakhand and Punjab. In the upcoming assembly elections, the whole

country will have to keep an eye on the situation in Punjab. There the conditions continue to remain unfavorable. Anti-national elements are openly making their move under the guise of the farmers' movement. There is a Congress-led government there, which is prone to a breakdown and clash within the party. Anti-BJP forces are also active. The new Director-General of Police and Election Commission of Punjab will need to ensure fair elections in these regions. Punjab is one of the border-states of the country and cannot be left unchecked.

Recently in Punjab, the convoy of our Honourable Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi, was stopped in its tracks as a part of a conspiracy. The whole country witnessed it. It is the united desire of the nation that the voters reject such anti-national forces during the Punjab Assembly elections. India also hopes that the consequences of the Coronavirus should not come to the fore during the elections of these five states. Due to the widespread Covid-19 vaccination drive, we hope that the country will celebrate its democratic festival properly.

(The writer is a senior editor, columnist, and former MP)

Violence against women and girls: the shadow pandemic

With 90 countries in lockdown, four billion people are now sheltering at home from the global contagion of COVID-19. It's a protective measure, but it brings another deadly danger. We see a shadow pandemic growing, of violence against women.

COVID-19: Women front and centre
As more countries report infection and lockdown, more domestic violence helplines and shelters across the world are reporting rising calls for help. In Argentina, Canada, France, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom [1], and the United States [2], government authorities, women's rights activists and civil society partners have flagged increasing reports of domestic violence during the crisis, and heightened demand for emergency shelter [3,4,5]. Helplines in Singapore [6] and Cyprus have registered an increase in calls by more than 30 per cent [7]. In Australia, 40 per cent of frontline workers in a New South Wales survey reported increased requests for help with violence that was escalating in intensity [8].

Confinement is fostering the tension and strain created by security, health, and money worries. And it is increasing isolation for women with violent partners, separating them from the people and resources that can best help them. It's a perfect storm for controlling, violent behaviour behind closed doors. And in parallel, as health sys-

tems are stretching to breaking point, domestic violence shelters are also reaching capacity, a service deficit made worse when centres are repurposed for additional COVID-response.

Even before COVID-19 existed, domestic violence was already one of the greatest human rights violations. In the previous 12 months, 243 million women and girls (aged 15-49) across the world have been subjected to sexual or physical violence by an intimate partner. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, this number is likely to grow with multiple impacts on women's wellbeing, their sexual and reproductive health, their mental health, and their ability to participate and lead in the recovery of our societies and economy.

Wide under-reporting of domestic and other forms of violence has previously made response and data gathering a challenge, with less than 40 per cent of women who experience violence seeking help of any sort or reporting the crime. Less than 10 per cent of those women seeking help go to the police. The current circumstances make reporting even harder, including limitations on women's and girls' access to phones and helplines and disrupted public services like police, justice and social services. These disruptions may also be compromising the care and support that survivors need, like

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka

clinical management of rape, and mental health and psycho-social support. They also fuel impunity for the perpetrators. In many countries the law is not on women's side; 1 in 4 countries have no laws specifically protecting women from domestic violence. Gender-Based Violence and COVID-19 - UN chief video message

If not dealt with, this shadow pandemic will also add to the economic impact of COVID-19. The global cost of violence against women had previously been estimated at approximately USD 1.5 trillion. That figure can only be rising as violence increases now, and continues in the aftermath of the pandemic.

The increase in violence against women must be dealt with urgently with measures embedded in economic support and stimulus packages that meet the gravity and scale of the challenge and reflect the needs of women who face multiple forms of discrimination. The Secretary-General has called for all governments to make the prevention and redress of violence against women a key part of their national response plans for COVID-19. Shelters and helplines for women must be considered an essential service for every country with specific funding and broad efforts made to increase awareness about their availability.

Grassroots and women's organizations and

communities have played a critical role in preventing and responding to previous crises and need to be supported strongly in their current frontline role including with funding that remains in the longer-term. Helplines, psychosocial support and online counselling should be boosted, using technology-based solutions such as SMS, online tools and networks to expand social support, and to reach women with no access to phones or internet. Police and justice services must mobilize to ensure that incidents of violence against women and girls are given high priority with no impunity for perpetrators. The private sector also has an important role to play, sharing information, alerting staff to the facts and the dangers of domestic violence and encouraging positive steps like sharing care responsibilities at home.

COVID-19 is already testing us in ways most of us have never previously experienced, providing emotional and economic shocks that we are struggling to rise above. The violence that is emerging now as a dark feature of this pandemic is a mirror and a challenge to our values, our resilience and shared humanity. We must not only survive the coronavirus, but emerge renewed, with women as a powerful force at the centre of recovery.

Executive Director of UN Women

India-China trade grows to record USD 125 billion in 2021 despite Ladakh tensions

BEIJING: The India-China bilateral trade touched a record high of over USD 125 billion in 2021, crossing the USD 100 billion mark in a year when the relations hit a new low due to the prolonged standoff by the militaries in eastern Ladakh, while India's trade deficit too mounted to over USD 69 billion, according to official data released on Friday.



China's exports to India from January to December rose 46.2 per cent to USD 97.52 billion, while India's exports to China grew by 34.2 per cent to USD 28.14 billion. The trade deficit for India grew to USD 69.38 billion in 2021. India has been highlighting its concerns over the growing trade deficit with China for over a decade and calling on Beijing to open its markets for India's IT and pharmaceutical products. Observers say much of China's exports increase this year to India was attributed to the import of medical products and raw materials for India's burgeoning pharmaceutical industry due to thousands of soldiers as well as heavy weaponry.

of over USD 125 billion in 2021, crossing the USD 100 billion mark in a year when the relations hit a new low due to the prolonged standoff by the militaries in eastern Ladakh, while India's trade deficit too mounted to over USD 69 billion, according to official data released on Friday. The total trade between China and India in 2021 stood at USD 125.66 billion, up 43.3 per cent from 2020, state-run Global Times reported, quoting data from the General Administration of Customs.

per cent to USD 97.52 billion, while India's exports to China grew by 34.2 per cent to USD 28.14 billion. The trade deficit for India grew to USD 69.38 billion in 2021. India has been highlighting its concerns over the growing trade deficit with China for over a decade and calling on Beijing to open its markets for India's IT and pharmaceutical products. Observers say much of China's exports increase this year to India was attributed to the import of medical products and raw materials for India's burgeoning pharmaceutical industry due to thousands of soldiers as well as heavy weaponry.

the massive second wave of COVID-19 and recurring bouts of the virus in the country. The landmark increase of the bilateral trade crossing USD 100 billion went without much fanfare as the relations remained frosty over the lingering military standoff in eastern Ladakh. The border standoff between the armies of India and China erupted on May 5 last year following a violent clash in the Pangong lake areas and both sides have gradually enhanced their deployment by rushing in tens of thousands of soldiers as well as heavy weaponry.

Amid tensions at Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Russia demands US, NATO response next week

MOSCOW: A number of government websites in Ukraine were down on Friday after a huge hacking attack, Ukrainian officials said. While it was not immediately clear who was behind the attacks, they come amid heightened tensions with Russia and after talks between



Moscow and the West failed to yield any significant progress this week. "As a result of a massive hacking attack, the websites of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a number of other government agencies are temporarily down. Our specialists are already working on restoring the work of IT systems," spokesman of Ukraine's Foreign Ministry Oleg Nikolenko wrote on Facebook on Friday. Nikolenko told The Associated Press it was too soon to tell who could have been behind the attacks. "It's too early to draw conclusions as the investigation is ongoing, but there is a long record of Russian cyber assaults against Ukraine in the past," he said. Moscow had previously denied involvement in cyber attacks against Ukraine. Websites of the country's Cabinet, seven ministries, the Treasury, the National Emergency Service and the state services website, where Ukrainians' electronic passports and vaccination certificates are stored, were unavailable Friday as the result of the hack. The websites contained a message in Ukrainian, Russian and Polish, saying that Ukrainians' personal data has been leaked to the public domain. "Be afraid and expect the worst. This is for your past, present and future," the message read, in part. Ukraine's State Service of Communication and

Information Protection has said that no personal data has been leaked. The U.S. estimates Russia has massed about 100,000 troops near Ukraine, a buildup that has stoked fears of an invasion. Moscow says it has no plans to attack and rejects Washington's demand to pull back its forces, saying it has the right to deploy them wherever necessary. The Kremlin has demanded security guarantees from the West precluding NATO's expansion eastwards. Last month, Moscow submitted draft security documents demanding that NATO deny membership to Ukraine and other former Soviet countries and roll back the alliance's military deployments in Central and Eastern Europe. Washington and its allies have refused to provide such pledges, but said they are ready for the talks. High-stakes talks this week between Moscow and the U.S., followed by a meeting of Russia and NATO representatives and a meeting at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, failed to bring about any immediate progress. The European Union's top diplomat said Friday that the 27-nation bloc is ready to mobilize all its resources to provide technical assistance to Ukraine and help it improve its capacity to weather cyberattacks. Speaking at a meeting of EU foreign ministers in the French port city of Brest, Josep Borrell said the EU will mobilize its cyber rapid response teams. Borrell added that he would ask member countries to allow Ukraine benefit from anti-cyberattacks resources within the framework of the EU Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), even though the country is not a member of the union. "We are going to mobilize all our resources to help Ukraine cope with these cyberattacks," Borrell said. "Sadly, we expected this could happen." Asked who could be behind the attack, Borrell said: "I can't point at anybody because I have no proof, but one can imagine."

The CDSs' chopper crash was a result of entry into clouds: Indian Air Force

NEW DELHI: The Indian Air Force (IAF) Chopper which crashed with Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat and 13 others on board was due to the helicopter's entry into clouds due to unexpected change in weather conditions in the valley which eventually led to the "Controlled Flight into Terrain". The Indian Air Force in a statement on Friday said, "The accident was a result of entry into clouds due to unexpected change in weather conditions in the valley. This led to spatial disorientation of the pilot resulting in Controlled Flight into Terrain." As reported by TNIE earlier, now the Court of Inquiry has officially "ruled out mechanical fail-

ure, sabotage or negligence as a cause of the accident." The Tri-Services Court of Inquiry into the Mi-17 V5 accident on 08 Dec 21 has submitted its preliminary findings, said the IAF. The Inquiry was led by Air Marshal Manavendra Singh and was supported by a Commodore and Brigadier of Navy and Army respectively. The inquiry team analysed the Flight Data Recorder and Cockpit Voice Recorder besides questioning all available witnesses to determine the most prob-

able cause of the accident. Based on its findings, the Court of Inquiry has made certain recommendations that are being reviewed. The TNIE had already reported on January 5 that bad weather leading to a phenomenon called Controlled Flight Into Terrain (CFIT) is believed to have been identified as the prime cause of the helicopter crash in Coonoor in which CDS General Bipin Rawat and 13 others died. On January 1, the report was forwarded for legal vetting.

The CFIT is explained to be a phenomenon when an aircraft under control is piloted into the ground, water or other terrain largely due to bad weather or pilot error. It generally takes place in bad weather conditions or when a flight is landing. According to the IATA (International Air Transport Association), CFIT refers to accidents in which there was a collision with terrain, water, or obstacle, without indication of loss of control of the aircraft. The Federal Aviation Administration of the US government described CFIT as an unintentional collision with terrain (the ground, a body of water, or an obstacle) while an aircraft is under positive control.





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Veteran Film Director N Chandra to be Awarded 'Lifetime Achievement Award' in the Rajasthan International Film Festival-2022

Jaipur(KCN): 13th January 2022: The 8th edition of the

tional Film Festival (RIFF). This award is given to such a per-

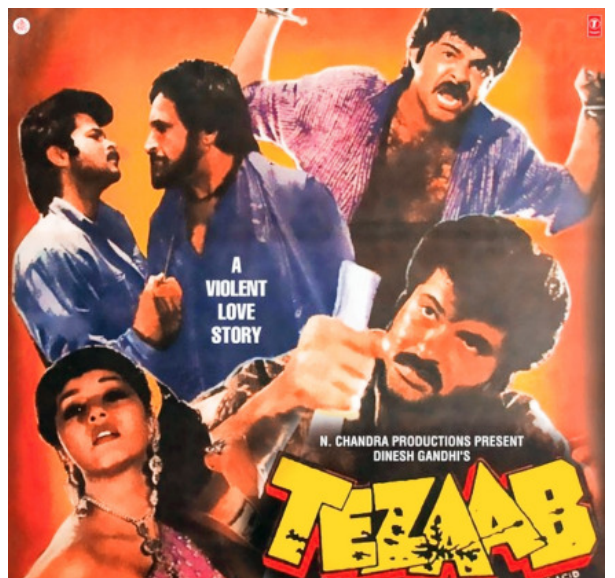
and Dimple Kapadia. The filmography of N Chandra also includes films like 'Humlaa', 'Yugandhari',

N Chandra has been a member of the Governing Council of the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune. Along with



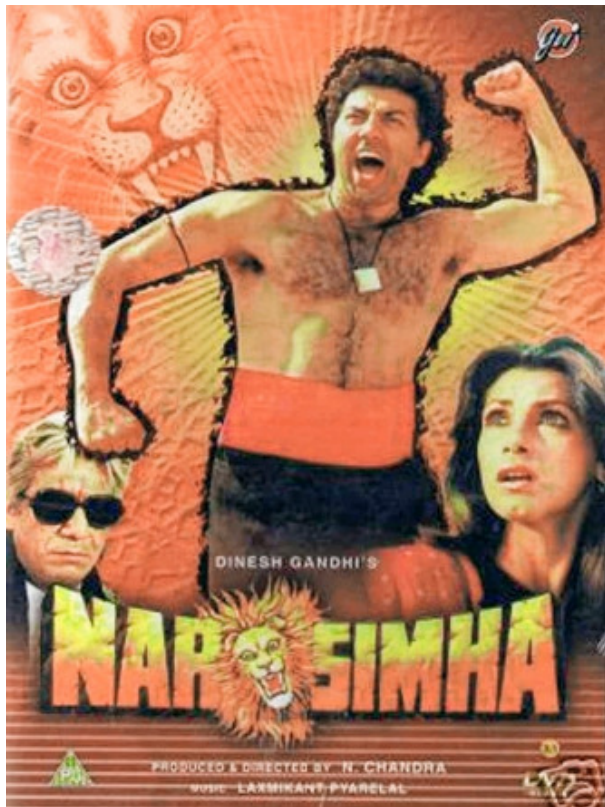
Rajasthan International Film Festival (RIFF) will be organized by RIFF Film Club from 25-30th March 2022 and will also celebrate

sonality in the film industry who has dedicated his whole life to the cinema. Chandrashekhar Narvekar (N Chandra) is an Indian



Rajasthan Diwas. Somendra Harsh, Founder & Festival Director of the Rajasthan International Film Festival (RIFF) stated that this year the Life Time Achievement Award will be given to the renowned Writer, Producer and Director Chandrashekhar Narvekar (N Chandra) at the 8th Rajasthan Interna-

producer, writer and director who is known for crisp realism in his early Dark and Loud films. His most successful commercial films are 'Ankush' starring Nana Patekar, 'Pratighaat' starring Sujata Mehta and Nana Patekar, 'Tezaab' starring Anil Kapoor and Madhuri Dixit and 'Narasimha' starring Sunny Deol



'Tejaswini', 'Bekaabu', 'Wajood', 'Shikari', 'Style', 'Xcuse Me', 'Kagaar: Life on the Edge' and 'Ye Mera India' etc.

After his schooling, N Chandra began his career as a film editor at the Film Center in Tardeo, Mumbai, where his father also worked. He started his film career as an assistant editor in Sunil Dutt's film 'Reshma Aur Shera' in 1969. He got a break in the film industry as a clapper boy in Gulzar's 'Parichay' (1972). N Chandra worked as an assistant editor with Pran Mehra, Vaman Bhosle and Guru Dutt early in his career, leading to films by Raj Ghosla, BR Chopra and Ravi Tandon. Gradually, N Chandra continued to grow as a film editor and assistant director.

this, he has also been the Chairman of the jury of Indian Panorama of 2010 and 2011 and was also included in the Indian Film Entry Jury for Oscars in 2006 and 2011. He was also the Chairman of the Jury at the 67th National Film Awards 2019 (which were awarded in 2021). Anshu Harsh, the Managing Trustee of RIFF Film Club said that "In this 8th edition of the Rajasthan International Film Festival (RIFF) Short, Documentary, Animation, Feature, Regional, Rajasthani films as well as music albums can be submitted by visiting the website www.riffjaipur.org and also by filmfreeway. The next deadline to submit the film is 31st January 2022."

Torchbearer of peace: Andhra Pradesh Governor on Vivekananda



VIJAYAWADA: Governor Biswa Bhusan Harichandan paid rich tributes to Swami Vivekananda on the latter's 160th birth anniversary at a programme held at Raj Bhavan's Durbar Hall here on

Wednesday. "Swami Vivekananda played a major role in the upliftment of the society by educating women and the downtrodden and highlighted the importance of unity among all religions.

He inspired millions of youths throughout the world with his teachings and his speech at the World's Parliament of Religions held in September 1893, made him famous as an 'orator by divine

right'," he said. "Swami Vivekananda's strong personality, vast knowledge in science and Vedanta made him the torchbearer of peace and humanity," the Governor added.

At 19,474, new COVID-19 cases drop marginally in Mumbai

MUMBAI: Mumbai on Sunday reported 19,474

infections and five deaths. Of the 19,474 cases

It said that 7,432 of the total 34,900 beds (21.3 per cent)

the metropolis with 1,17,437 active cases.



COVID-19 cases and seven fatalities, taking the city's tally of infections to 9,14,572 and the toll to 16,406, the city civic body said. A day earlier the city had reported 20,318 coronavirus

reported on Sunday, 15,969 (82 per cent) are asymptomatic. A total of 1,240 patients were hospitalised during the day, the civic body's health department said.

have been occupied in Mumbai. A total of 8,063 patients were discharged after treatment, which raised the tally of recoveries so far to 7,78,119 in Mumbai, leaving

Mumbai's case recovery rate now stands at 85 per cent. The doubling rate is 41 days. With 68,249 new tests, the cumulative number of tests in Mumbai rose to 1,42,03,805.

Hong Kong bans transit flights from over 150 countries; Cambodia launches fourth round of vaccinations

HONG KONG: Hong Kong International Airport said Friday that it would ban passengers from over 150 countries and territories from transiting in the city for a month, as it sought to stem the transmission of the highly contagious omicron variant of the coronavirus. Passengers who have stayed in over 150 places deemed "high risk" in the last 21 days, including the United States and Britain, will be banned from transiting in Hong Kong from Jan.16 to Feb.15, according to a notice posted by the airport. The ban comes as the city grapples with an omicron outbreak,

with most of the cases traced to two crew members of Cathay Pacific who had broken isolation rules and dined at restaurants and bars in the city before testing positive. Over 50 local infections have been reported in the community since the end of 2021. Prior to that, Hong Kong went three months with no community transmissions and had been in talks with the mainland to resume quarantine-exempted travel with the rest of China. Last week, Hong Kong imposed a two-week ban on incoming flights from the U.S., Canada, Australia, France, Britain, India, Pakistan and

the Philippines. The city has also



banned dining in after 6 p.m. and ordered venues such as museums, cinemas, gyms and libraries to close. Hong Kong has aligned itself with China's "zero-tolerance" COVID-19 policy, with authorities intent on stamping out all outbreaks with sometimes draconian measures.

Cambodia on Friday



of vaccinations against the coronavirus in response to the omicron variant, with high-risk groups among the first to receive the additional boosters. Front-line medical staff and members of the armed forces were among those lining up at hospitals and clinics.

Government ministers, including Prime

Minister Hun Sen, also received booster doses on Friday. Hun Sen has appealed to all Cambodian people to get fully vaccinated, including a booster, saying on his Facebook page that it is the only way to keep their families and communities safe from COVID-19.

A campaign to have people get their third jabs is still ongoing. Almost 90% of Cambodia's 16 million people have had at least one dose, over 85% have had a second shot and more than 27% have had a third, according to the government. Thanks largely to donations from close ally China, Cambodia has had enough vaccine supplies to send on to other Asian nations in need. But the Chinese Sinovac and Sinopharm vaccines have been found to have less efficacy than others against the highly transmissible omicron variant, especially with the passage of time, so the fourth round of

high-priority vaccinations is using Cambodia's more limited supply of Pfizer vaccines. Neighboring Thailand, which like Cambodia was largely reliant on the Chinese vaccines during the early stages of its inoculation program last year, announced last week that fourth doses will be given to medical personnel whose third shot was at least three months ago. Cambodia's first case of the omicron variant was confirmed in mid-December in a 23-year-old woman who returned from Ghana. Cambodia reopened its borders to fully vaccinated travelers

on Nov.15, two weeks earlier than originally planned, in a move aimed at revitalizing the country's economic and social activity. Its vaccination drive started slowly but ramped up quickly. Children aged 5 and older have been included in the program since the beginning of November. Restrictions on domestic tourism, schools and other sectors were also lifted at the start of the month. The Health Ministry on Friday reported 10 new COVID-19 cases, all the omicron variant, with four imported and six local transmissions. Cambodia has recorded 120,728 cases, including 3,015 deaths, since the pandemic began.

WPI inflation eases to 13.56 per cent in December 2021; food items, veggies see price rise

NEW DELHI: The wholesale price-based inflation bucked the 4-month rising trend in December 2021, and eased to 13.56 per cent, mainly on account of softening in fuel, power and manufacturing items even though food prices hardened. WPI inflation has remained in double digits for the ninth consecutive month beginning April. Inflation in November was 14.23 per cent, while in De-

CAIT files petition before CCI to block Amazon's deal to acquire 100 per cent shareholding in Cloutail



Domestic traders' body CAIT on Friday said it has filed a petition before the Competition Commission of India (CCI) to block the transaction that has been entered into by Amazon where they will acquire 100 per cent shareholding in Cloutail. The petition provides evidence to show Cloutail charges less fees/commission and is a preferential seller on the platform, and with its 100 per cent acquisition, Amazon will cause an adverse effect on the market, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) alleged in a statement. "CAIT has today filed a petition before the Competition Commission of India seeking to block the trans-

Industry leaders confident about India's economic recovery, expansion: Survey

NEW DELHI: Optimism and confidence are ruling high amongst Indian businesses as a significant percentage of with monetary policy actions by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) did contribute to bringing the economy back on announcing incentives for increased R&D spending. This would be beneficial for sectors such as life sciences,



the government is able to sustain the efforts on implementation of reforms such as asset monetisation for the infrastructure growth, and PLI schemes," he said. Moreover, most of the business leaders anticipate that the increasing startup activity, coupled with the government's stimulus packages and policies, will push the ease of doing business in India, resulting in a quick economic revival, Kumar added. As per the survey, about 59 per cent respondents believe that India provides a favourable atmosphere to run a business. Encouraging digitalisation, simplifying tax regimes, and improving land and labour laws would help enhance the ease of doing business in India, it said. DTTILLP said the survey aimed to analyse the industry's expectations from the upcoming budget, with the standpoint of economic growth, the ease of doing business, and self-reliance.



cember 2020 it was 1.95 per cent. "The high rate of inflation in December 2021 is primarily due to rise in prices of mineral oils, basic metals, crude petroleum & natural gas, chemicals and chemical products, food products, textile and paper and paper products etc as compared to the corresponding month of the previous year," the Commerce and Industry Ministry said in a statement. Inflation in manufactured items was lower at 10.62 per cent in December, against 11.92 per cent in the previous month. In fuel and power basket

the rate of price rise was 32.30 per cent in December, against 39.81 per cent in November. Inflation in food articles, however, witnessed an uptick on a month-on-month basis at 9.56 per cent in December, against 4.88 per cent in November. Vegetable price rise rate spiked to 31.56 per cent, against 3.91 per cent in the previous month. Data released earlier this week showed, retail inflation based on Consumer Price Index (Combined) rose to 5.59 per cent in December, from 4.91 per cent a month ago as food prices inched up

Covid continues cross 10K mark

Continued from page-1

Keonjhar (114), Bargarh (102), Bhadrak (102), Angul (85), Kendrapara (74), Dhenkanal (69), Ganjam (55), Nuapada (45), Malkangiri (30), Kandhamal (26), Boudh (24), Deogarh (23) and State Pool (796). Meanwhile, the State has reported four death cases from Bhadrak, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur and Sundergarh. Now, the death toll in the State stood at 8476. The daily test positivity rate (TPR) of Odisha went up to 13.5 per cent from 12.40 per cent recorded yesterday. The State had recorded a TPR of 11.76 per cent on January 12 and 10.25 per cent on January 11.

Rourkela Steel Plant to check pollution in Brahmani river

Continued from page-1

clear water body over around 20 hectares to add to the biodiversity and aesthetics. Another project, at an estimated cost of Rs 34 crore, is underway for the biological treatment of Coke Oven effluent at the biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) Plant. Now, the treated water from the BOD Plant is recycled back to Coke Ovens for its utilisation in coke quenching.

A Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) for Rs 15 crore is being installed at Outfall-7 for treatment of wastewater generated at different canteens, washrooms and toilets. Another project is also underway for the total treatment of effluents coming to Outfall-1 from the Steel Melting Shop-2 with the latest technology. Andhra Pradesh trawler seized near Rushikulya mouth

BERHAMPUR: Wildlife wing of the Forest department seized an Andhra Pradesh trawler for fishing in the prohibited zone near Rushikulya mouth on Friday. Acting on a tip-off, forest officials led by Khallikote ranger Sidhartha Sankar Sahu and Rambha forester Abinash Choudhury apprehended the trawler and seized 340 kg of fish besides detaining seven crew members. They were later handed over to the Fisheries department.

Imran, Pakistan Defence Minister exchange heated words over neglect of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province

Continued from page-1

the whole day and met a number of legislators hailing from his Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) and other parties in the ruling coalition. According to sources, Khattak was of the view that the province was being neglected in terms of provision of electricity and gas, while these facilities were being enjoyed by the people of other provinces.

The defence minister told the prime minister that if the situation lingered on, the people of the province would not vote for PTI, the newspaper quoted sources as saying.

However, Khattak told the media after the meeting that he neither harshly talked to the prime minister nor hurled any threat of not voting for Khan and had just raised the issue of gas shortage and ban on new gas connections in the province.

"Imran Khan is my leader and prime minister and I did not tell him that I will not vote for him if gas connections are not given to the people of KP," he said.

Khattak said he left the meeting hall for a smoke.

"I am a smoker and I went outside the meeting hall to smoke," he added.

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Political Affairs Shahbaz Gill later confirmed that Khattak had raised the issue of non-provision of gas to the people of KP.

He said the defence minister told Minister of Energy Hammad Azhar that gas supply schemes in KP were being blocked and no new gas connections were being given to the people of the province.

After the parliamentary party's meeting, the prime minister called the defence minister to his chamber where he again expressed displeasure over Khattak's "attitude", the report said.

Protesters clash with Odisha Police near proposed JSW plant site; many injured

Continued from page-1

children in the age group of 9 to 11 years and 11 were above 60 years.

Swain alleged that even the injured persons were not taken to the hospital by the police. Jagatsinghpur Superintendent of Police Akhileshwar Singh, however, rejected the allegations.

"The security personnel were attacked by the villagers. Our personnel tolerated it for long hours and later used minimum force. In the scuffle, about five policemen have been injured," the SP said.

Singh said there is no forceful acquisition of betel vines in the proposed plant site as villagers have accepted compensation for them.

"We can show the documents having signature of the villagers who on their own accepted compensation and gave away betel vines. Everything has been done with the consent of the villagers," he said.

Erasama Tehsildar, P N Das, who was present at the site, said that the villagers have given consent to acquire their betel vines following which the administration demolished them. There is no illegality, he claimed.

Five people, including Swain, were arrested in connection with the alleged attack on police personnel.

To a question whether he, as a magistrate, ordered the police to use baton on the villagers, Das said, "I will not be able to speak everything right now."

Meanwhile, tension prevailed in Dhinkia Gram Panchayat area after the violence.

Many men are hiding in a nearby jungle to avoid arrest.

The police have also demolished three bamboo gates earlier erected by the people at the entry points to Dhinkia village, Swain alleged. As many as 15 platoons (450 personnel) of police were deployed in Dhinkia area in view of the prevailing situation, an official said.

Opposition parties condemned the police action against the villagers.

BJP state president Samir Mohanty said, "There is a gap between the administration and the people. The government cannot build any project forcibly. The project should be developed with support of people and not with help of the police."

Senior Congress leader Lalatendu Mohapatra demanded a judicial probe into the "police excesses".

Around a decade ago, South Korean steel major Posco had also proposed to establish its mega steel plant project in the region, but failed in its bid due to strong protest from the local villagers.

2022 edition of Indian Premier League could be held in South Africa, says report

NEW DELHI: South Africa could be in the fray to host the 2022 edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL), according to a newspaper report on Thursday. The report said that Sri Lanka could be a backup venue option if the third wave of the Covid-19 pandemic

with Chennai Super Kings winning the final on October 15 in Dubai. "We can't be dependent on UAE all the time so we decided to explore more options, South Africa's time difference also works out well for the players," a BCCI official was quoted as saying

tions in India. What has helped build South Africa's case is that they gave the Indian team, currently in the country for a three-match Test series followed by an ODI series of as many matches, good hotels and resorts where they are staying in a bio-secure bubble en-

property and that has made things easier for the players who for the last couple of years or so have been confined to their rooms on several overseas tours," further said an official. Incidentally, India's tour to South Africa was under huge uncertainty due to the



in India doesn't end by early April. In 2021, the 14th edition of the IPL in India was suspended after May 4 due to the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic breaching the bio-bubbles of various teams. The remainder of the tournament was then played in the United Arab Emirates (UAE),

in The Indian Express. With the addition of two new IPL teams in Lucknow and Ahmedabad, the 2022 edition of the IPL will be very long. If the move happens, it will be the second time South Africa would host the IPL after the 2009 edition was shifted there due to the general elec-

environment. The Indian team stayed at the Irene Country Lodge for the first two Test matches and are currently living in The Taj Hotel in Cape Town. "The place where the team was staying for the second Test is spread over several acres. There were walking tracks and even a pond on the

Omicron variant causing a surge in cases in the Rainbow Nation. Eventually, the tour dates were rescheduled and the T20I leg shifted to a later date. But with cases coming down in South Africa, it could be an ideal destination for IPL to take place if the third wave in India continues into April 2022.

ECI Conducts Training for Observers

Bhubaneswar(KCN): A total 73 Odisha Cadre IAS and IPS Officers as well as IRS Officers posted in the state have been roped in for Central Observers for the five poll bound states of Goa, Manipur, Punjab, Uttar

Pradesh, and Uttarakhand. A Training in virtual mode was conducted by the Election Commission of India (ECI) for these Central Observers, who attended the training in the Convention Hall of Lokaseva Bhawan at the State Headquarters here at Bhubaneswar. Chief Electoral Of-

ficer, Sushil Kumar Lohani, along with his team of officers were present on this occasion. All the three Election Commissioners including Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra, Election Commissioners Rajiv Kumar and Anup Chandra attended the programme and ad-

dressd the participants. They urged the officers to feel proud to be part of this mega exercise as eyes and ears of the Commission. They further advised them to guide the electoral process while on duty ensuring that all COVID protocols are followed in letter and spirit. The Election Commission emphasized on the neutrality and impartiality of the Central Ob-



ervers. They should be visible, they must be cordial and available to the public and election machinery. They advised the Observers to ensure that the local administration conducts the elections in a free,

fair & impartial manner in a Covid safe environment. General Secretary, ECI, Umesh Sinha and other senior officers of the Commission made thematic presentations on the different aspects of conduct of Election during the pandemic situation. The training was conducted following all COVID norms in the convention centre in a fully sanitized man-

ner.

World Odisha Society Observes First Foundation Day

Continued from page-1
Renowned CA Sudhir Dash, Vice President Women's Wing Reeta Patra and Other Members have Displayed the Flyers Of WOS as a Mark Of Solidarity to WOS And Worldwide Odia Unity at the Premises Of Shree Jagannath Temple At Hauzkhaz Village in New Delhi on the Auspicious Occasion. They also Offered Deepas At The Temple. Similar Offering of Deepas, Lighting of Candles And Displaying Of WOS's Flyers at Jagannath Temples, Hindu Temples and Historical Sites All Over the World have been Organised by the Members and Lovers of WOS to Symbolically Observe the Holy Day.

8 more boxers test positive, NIS COVID count rises to 26 but national camp continues

NEW DELHI: Eight more boxers tested positive for COVID-19 in

"Two main boxers Sumit and Rohit Mor and six of their sparring

Krishan, Kaushik, Chaudhary and Satish

Manish Ashish and Satish. The symptoms experienced at that time were



the ongoing men's national camp at NIS, Patiala on Thursday, taking the total number of cases to 26 but all those infected are complaining of "relatively mild symptoms". After 18 campers, 12 boxers and six support staff members returned positive for the virus on Wednesday, eight more were added to the tally after a fresh round of testing. The total number of infected boxers now stands at 20.

partners have tested positive. The camp is continuing and all those infected are in isolation with mostly mild symptoms, it's nothing like the second wave," a source in the national camp told PTI. Among the support staff infected are head coach Narender Rana and coach coordinator C A Kuttappa along with assistant coach Suranjay Singh. The camp will also feature Tokyo Olympians Amit Panghal, Vikas

Kumar in a couple of days after their names were approved by the Boxing Federation of India. The five had been kept out earlier for not participating in the national championships. It remains to be seen whether the current outbreak affects their schedule. "I don't think the camp will be affected, we have around 20 cases in the second wave and proceedings went on with those infected in isola-

worse," said the source. "Right now, there is just a bit of cold. Fever was there for a day or so but most of those found positive are completely asymptomatic. One guy left in his private vehicle as he developed a back problem," he added. Boxing camps were disrupted during the pandemic's second wave for a brief period but resumed after the infections subsided.



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